

Journey to Pentecost: The Spirit

Week 1

Intro

The Spirit - Augsburg Confession (1530), Article I. Of God

¹Our Churches, with common consent, do teach that the decree of the Council of Nicaea concerning the Unity of the Divine Essence and concerning the Three Persons, is true and to be believed without any doubting;

PAUSE RIGHT THERE – why Council of Nicaea and its Creed? Why not Apostles Creed?

[CONT...]

²that is to say, there is one Divine Essence which is called and which is God: eternal, without body, without parts, of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, the Maker and Preserver of all things, visible and invisible; and ³yet there are three Persons, of the same essence and power, who also are coeternal, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. And the term “person” ⁴they use as the Fathers have used it, to signify, not a part or quality in another, but that which subsists of itself. ⁵They condemn all heresies which have sprung up against this article, as the Manichaeans, who assumed two principles, one Good and the other Evil: also the Valentinians, Arians, Eunomians, Mohammedans, and all such. ⁶They condemn also the Samosatenes, old and new, who, contending that there is but one Person, sophistically and impiously argue that the Word and the Holy Ghost are not distinct Persons, but that “Word” signifies a spoken word, and “Spirit” signifies motion created in things.

What is the first, foundational point about the Spirit that this article wants to defend?

Sidebar, “Samosatenes”: followers of Paul of Samosata: bishop of Antioch from 260 AD; deposed in 269.

Summary of view on Spirit: “6. The Spirit is that power which God possesses of producing and animating all things at his pleasure. It first received the name of Spirit when it manifested itself in the creation of the world; and it is so called because it may be compared to the wind or the breath, which produces motions in the air. When it excites pious emotions in the souls of men, it is called the Holy Spirit.”

What theological and practical difference does it make to understand the Spirit as a person vs. a power?

What specific kinds of evidence do the follow passages give that the Spirit is indeed such a person?

- Mt 4:1 “[After his baptism] Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.”
- Rm 8:14 “For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God”
- John 14:26: “But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.”
- Lk 12:12 “the Holy Spirit will teach you at that very hour what you ought to say”
- Acts 20:22-3 [Paul] “And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there. I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me.”
- 1 Cor 12:4, 11 “7 Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good...One and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills”

How does the following passage help us know that the Spirit really is a DISTINCT person, and not just the Father or Son in another form?

John 15:26-27, 16:7-15 “When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father—he will testify about me. 27 And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning.

16:7-15: “7 But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. 8 When he comes, he will prove the world to be in the wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment: 9 about sin, because people do not believe in me; 10 about righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; 11 and about judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned. 12 “I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. 13 But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. 14 He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you. 15 All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will receive from me what he will make known to you.”

In all of this, toward whom (all) are the Spirit’s actions directed, and how does this help us better understand the Spirit’s personhood, aims, and mission?